/15 cont./

462 [281] [513] [912] morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter; money is not used in these cases.

433 [031] The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture, cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
● [541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 [556] Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it [262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the [243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This [824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).

/46 cont./

[782 23] pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

[782 224 [776] [796] Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals. Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usually the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice, they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

[782 24 [776] [796] Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored. Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

/47 cont./

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[776]

The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This

[776]

Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

[243]

Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

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The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

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The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

A [757 cont.]
233 unfavorable for it, for example, the cattle are therefore small. The herdsmen wandered with the stock from pasture to pasture, and from time to time built [Fig. 449 appears here] anew their
A wickerwork huts (see above, p. 6), which they took along with
●241 them. Now agriculture seems to predominate; the major crop is maize, but earlier it was spiked millet or, less often, wheat. Besides these, they also cultivate beans, flax, hemp, cotton,

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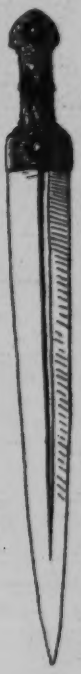

Fig. 449. Cherkess dagger with bone handle, colored green, and silver studs (1/3 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A
241 tobacco (that grown in Sukhumi is known as the best in the Caucasus), rice, climbing cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, many grapes and fruits: apples, pears, plums, figs, chestnuts,
A pomegranates, nuts, and others. Berry bushes grow on the slopes
242 in great number, but their fruit is almost never used in the economy, as in Georgia.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
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small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilakà* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilakà* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *rikap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abala*.

[1] *Anasp'a dzw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dzadsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satskhele*. The word *a-bala*, in Abkhasian *a-mərtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik tsdlii*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
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4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəkhwə bdl'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə-rshwəga*, *Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə*, eyebrow; *ashwəga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aztqyil* or *abgar ləmha*, *Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dzira*). Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadəl*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Anàp'a-nàga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jàja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 138.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
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belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: "Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *rákı, dzakı, rákı dzakı*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadə̀l*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sunrise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Anṭswakhwə̀* (or *Anṭswahwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Anṭswá*, God, and (*a*)-*khwə̀*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal